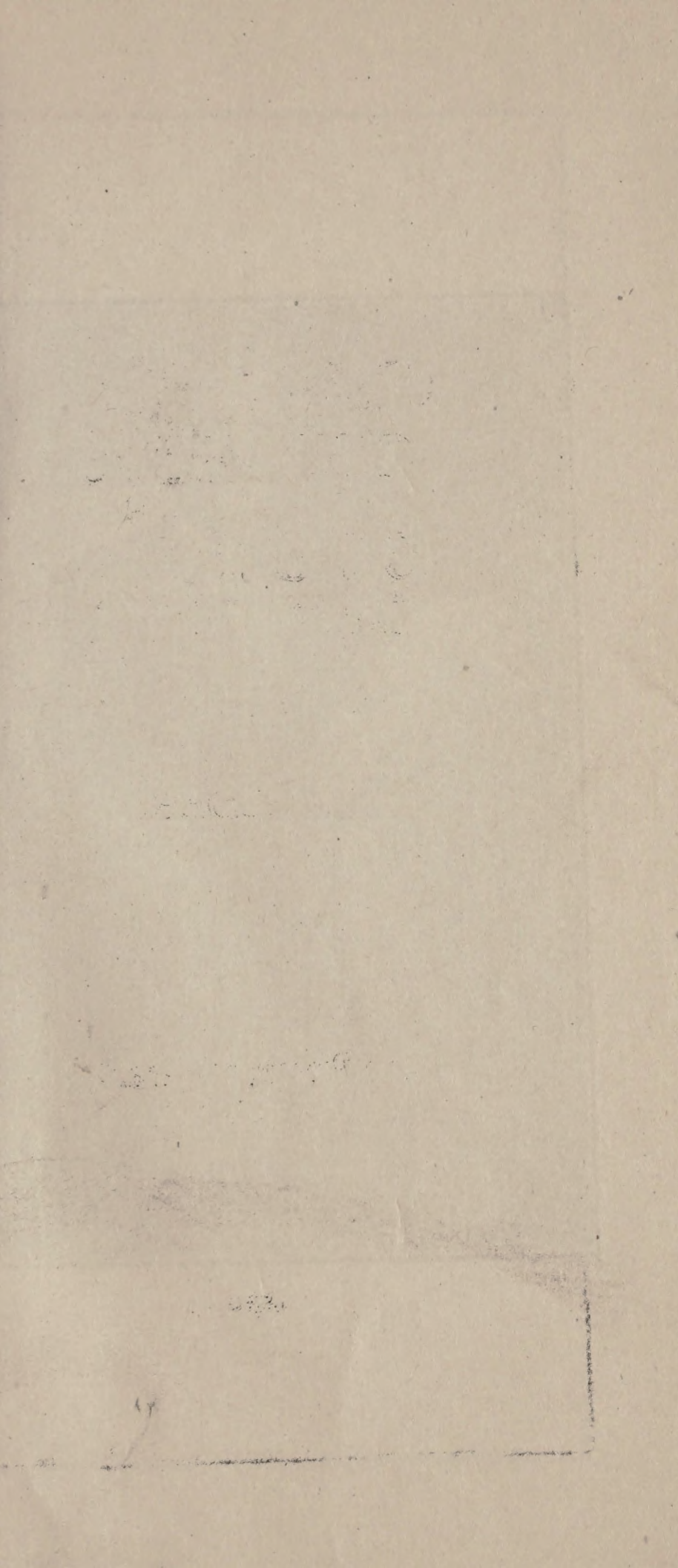
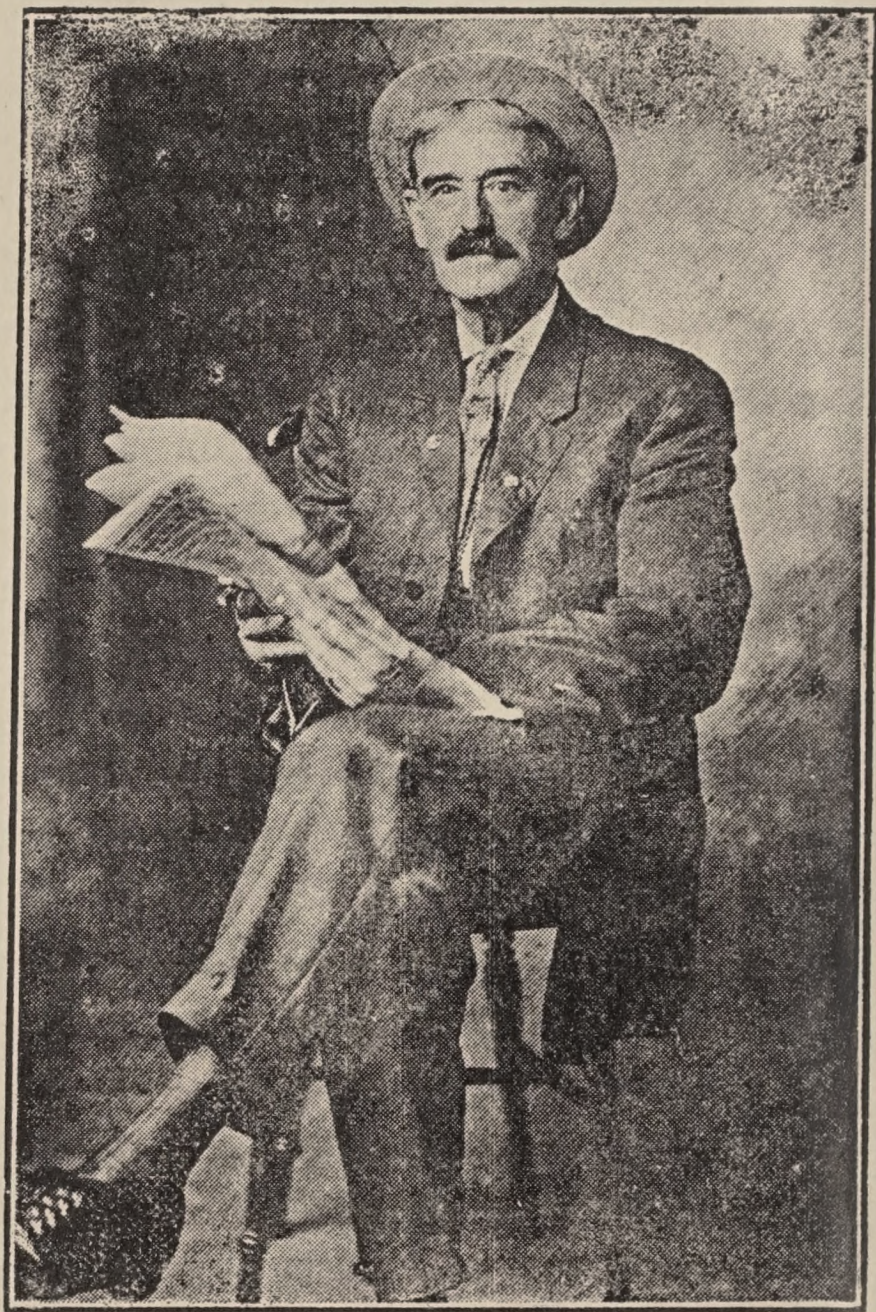


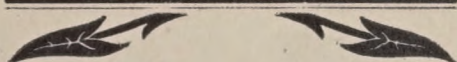
CHILDREN'S
STORIES







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BY

A. Selders
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EDITOR

OF

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P R E F A C E

In the following pages I have tried to present to the little children some stories that will interest them; make them ask questions, and from which a good moral may be drawn.

There are several typographical errors and a number of transpositions.

If we have succeeded in affording any amusement to them, we are satisfied. A. S.

DEDICATED

to my bright, clever, little
grandchildren, Robert Selders
Hall, Patricia Hall and John
Broughten Hall.

—By the Author.

BOY AND THE BEAR

These stories are original and are written by the editor of the paper. They have never been printed before. We will try and give a story weekly. If we can interest the little ones and present a good moral that can be drawn from it, our object will be obtained.

Once upon a time there lived on Spencer Creek in the valley near Buck Mountain and the Bundle mine a poor family, consisting of father, mother and nine children, ranging in age from 6 months to 16 years of age. They had moved in here from old Ken-

tucky in a prairie schooner. They had a small log hut with some out sheds where the horses and cow and pigs were sheltered.

The father worked in the Bundle mine along with his two older sons. The province of this story is only with practically one member of this family. Little Joe. He was a little over six years old. He was a very peculiar boy. He was solitary in his habits, that is, he would go off by himself and very seldom played with the other children.

The children all were served with some Johnny cake each afternoon about three o'clock. Joe would go off by himself and nothing would be seen of him until very near dark. His mother often wondered where he went and what he did, but she did not have time to find out.

During a winter along in

'57 the snow came down with great fury and it was several feet deep upon the level. It was so deep that it caused the wild game to come down off the mountains, looking for some thing to eat. Bears, wolves, deer and smaller game were in abundance in and around the home of Little Joe. In fact, so many were the bears and wolves that people hardly dared to go out of doors, unless armed with shooting irons.

While this was all going on, Joe was getting his corn bread every day and slipping off to eat it. His mother becoming alarmed, for fear he might be ate up by the bears, decided she would try and find out what he did with himself. So she watched him. He very secretly wriggled out to shed where the cow was kept and going on the outside his mother discovered him. Well,

children, what do you think he was doing? Well, we will tell you.

A great big bear was sitting down and Little Joe was feeding him the corn bread. He would fondle the bear and the bear would lick Joe's hands with his large rough tongue. They would play together like a boy and a dog.

After an hour or more of this play, Mr. Bear would start off and leave Little Joe. These impromptu meetings of the boy and bear kept up all winter and the bear appeared to be as punctual as clock work very afternoon.

Well, Spring approached and Mr. Bear betook himself to the mountains and it was very seldom that he came down to the trysting place.

Joe became more solitary than ever, he was almost morose. One evening he was nowhere to be found, the mother

was almost frantic about his non-appearance. Every nook and corner around the house was looked over but no Joe to be found.

A sleepless night was passed by the mother.

But what was Joe doing and where was he?

Joe was lonesome after his play-fellow, the bear, had left him and he made up his mind he would go and find him. He wandered down the creek and finally went upon the mountain among the pine forest trees. He wandered aimlessly along, never noticing it was getting along towards night until it commenced to get dark. He then started to go back home, but he found he was lost. What to do he did not know. He sat down and commenced to cry. But only for a minute. Said he to himself this will never do, so he got up and again started to

hunt his way back. It was no good, so he made up his mind to spend the night in the woods.

He went along to find a nice bunch of leaves to nestle up in, as the nights were still chilly. As he walked along a small path along the side of the mountain, he saw a hole in the bank or rock. He decided that was the place for him to crawl into, which he did. He found a nice warm bunch of leaves a short way into the cave and lay down and was soon fast asleep. He did not wake up till morning, when he felt something warm on his hands. He commenced to look around and see what it was. It was his friend, Mr. Bear. Mr. Bear had found Joe here.

This was the bear's home or den. When the bear saw Joe he lay down side of him and drew him up to him and put his shaggy legs around him the

same as if he had been a little bear.

The bear got up as well as Joe. The bear had Joe get on his back and away they went down the mountain side, and in a few hours, Joe's mother, looking out at the door was greeted by the glad sight of her little boy Joe on the back of a great big bear coming down the mountain. The bear came up to the house with his precious freight and was about to start off when Joe's mother told Joe to have the bear wait a minute. Joe went and got him some water and his mother brought the bear some corn bread and honey. It would have done your heart good to see that bear eat.

Every day for months the bear came down to Joe's home daily. His visits were appreciated by the whole family. In fact he was a sort of an adopted member. All at once his

visits stopped. It was a mystery to the whole family. But after thorough investigation, it was found that a party of hunters had killed him up on the mountain.

The moral to be drawn from this little story children, is, that you never lose anything by kindness to dumb animals as well as to human beings.



A BIRD BASIN

Once upon a time there was a little girl who liked the little birds. She was always cheerful when she heard the birds sing. She observed them in all their different moods. She became so familiar with their doings that she could almost tell when they were happy and when not. So closely did she watch them that she could tell when they were hungry and when they were thirsty. In winter time, when the snow was on the ground and there was scarcely anything that they could get to eat, she would throw out crumbs of bread. Daily the birds came to the back of her home and perched themselves on the lattice work of the porch and if she did not come out and feed

them, just when they thought they ought to get their rations, they commenced to sing with their loudest lays.

After they had had their meal she set out a pan of tepid water for them to slack their thirst.

The birds became so tame that she could almost put her hands upon them. No enemies of the birds were allowed to be around the home. She had no cat, as cats and birds are not good play fellows. The birds knew that no danger lurked around this home. And this little girl reaped her reward by having the trees around about her home inhabited by all kinds of song birds. She not only made home pleasant for herself but also for her parents by so doing.

In summer time she often saw that the birds would pant and have their mouths open as if wanting water. She pre-

pared a bird basin—that is she fixed a basin out in the lawn on a pile of rocks with vines planted around it. The basin was always full of water and almost any hour of the day, the basin would be surrounded with birds, some drinking and some in the basin bathing.

The birds knew where her room was and in the morning long before she got up, they would perch themselves in the apple tree near her window and sing like good little fellows. They would even light on her window sill. There were red birds, mocking birds, song sparrows and blue birds and in fact all kinds of birds.

When she went to school in the morning they would accompany her. They would fly ahead of her, lighting on the trees and fences and sing their sweetest songs.

She did this way all through her girlhood and when she

grew up she taught her little boys and girls to be kind to the birds and not rob their nests and always at her home some where in the yard, near the house a bird basin could always be found and no cat was given a home at that house.

So children if you want to have the birds sing around your home, treat them right and they will be your friends. And the best way in the world to make friends with the little feathered songsters is to install a bird basin in your yard at home and keep it full of fresh water and soon the birds will find it and will make your your home their retreat.

THE LITTLE DOG

Once upon a time there lived in the neighborhood of Uwharrie a little dog. He was extremely small and roamed but little because of the pugnacious attitude of many larger dogs who chased and barked at him wherever he went.

Whenever he did meet trouble, a bee line for home was the order and a steady courageous bark was his stock in trade just as soon as home was reached.

So, considering the trouble, he was prone to stay at home and bark at any dogs approaching, feeling safe when on his own door step.

But one day he had difficulty in escaping the larger dogs

which chased him and being unable to get home, he cut across country. Being small, he succeeded in getting into the underbrush and so evaded his pursuers.

In maneuvering about to get back to his home, he very carelessly dropped into a large hole that had been dug and covered over with brush for a bear trap.

Desperately he tried to jump out but in vain and finally, very much exhausted, he curled up in a corner.

Soon a crash was heard and into the pit dropped a large bear who had walked into the hole.

Now there was presented a problem. The dog cringed and shivered with fear. The bear in desperation, knowing his predicament, sought revenge upon the dog as the only prey within reach. And so the one-sided battle was on.

The bear tried to crush the little dog but was too slow to catch him and the dog, small, alert and filled with fear, twisted and turned to evade its larger opponent.

Finally very much tired out and realizing that the bear would eventually capture and kill him, the dog did a very strange thing. He turned and set himself with his little body rigid, eyes bulging and muscles drawn and desperately attacked the bear. His only weapon a mouth, he threw himself at the bear's throat and by a chance thus taken with his back against the wall, he succeeded in severing the bear's jugular vein.

The bear staggered back and the tremendous loss of blood soon sapped his life away and he died.

The dog was bewildered for a time and could not imagine that he was victor. He cau-

tiously approached the bear and fear having left him, he set about figuring a way out.

A bright thought came to him and he put it into action. He used the body of the bear as a platform, and running swiftly touched his feet to the bear's body and with a nimble jump cleared the top of the hole and was free.

On his way home he did not make any short cuts. Rather did he head down the main avenue, head up and independent.

Other dogs, as in the past, started for him intent upon chasing him home, but were surprised when the little fellow stood his ground and fought back and won.

Confidence in his own strength makes him a very happy dog. He goes and comes peacefully, never picking trouble but meeting the inevitable when it does come.

Other dogs who formerly chased him are now pals and life is serene and regular. He had found himself.

Moral—We all lead similar lives. We are inclined to shirk responsibilities. Our battles are passed on to others and we draw ourselves within our shells until we are plumb up against it and then we make a break.



A LITTLE GIRL'S PETS

All children are very fond of some kind of a pet. It is very funny what pets they have. There was a little dot of a girl in a neighboring state who had all kinds of pets. No matter what it was so it was alive, if she got possession of it she would make a pet of it.

A neighbor woman gave her three duck eggs. She brought them home and told her Mam-ma that she wanted some little ducks. So her Mam-ma placed them under an old setting hen and in a few weeks three little ducklings were hatched out. The little girl fed them and they soon knew her and whenever they saw her they would waddle up

to her. They would follow her all around her home. They would go in single file. As they grew up and became about full grown she would start up town with them. They would waddle along behind her in single file.

On the way up town there was an old board walk and it had several cracks in it. As she was going up town one day with her ducks she looked back to see if they were coming all right, when behold, there were no ducks in sight. She went back to look for them. She heard a quack but she could not just tell where the sound came from. Several people came out to help her find them. Finally they were discovered under the walk. They had fallen through one of the cracks. The boards of the walk had to be taken up and at last the ducks were gotten out. It was very amusing

to the town people to see the ducks follow her all over town.

Her father brought home a bushel of fresh, live oysters from Baltimore. He told her she could have some pets if she wanted to take care of them. He told her to put them on the cement cellar floor and then get a pan of water and put some salt and a little corn meal in it and stir it well, then take a whisk broom and put it in the water and sprinkle the water over the oysters and see what would happen. When she did this there was such a sucking done by the oysters that it was a novelty.

The whole town were there at different times to see her feed her oysters.

She kept them for several months and they got real fat and finally her mother told her that they would have to get rid of them as they wanted to use

the cellar. They were some would put them in their box and put them in the shed. Some way their box tipped over and her Mam-ma had occasion to go out to the shed for something and it was dark.

She could not step for turtles. This made her slightly some of the most delicious oysters that any one ever ate.

At one time she had about thirty turtles from the size of your hand to that of a wash basin. She kept them in a box out in the woodshed. Every day she would empty them out on the lawn and see what they would do. After playing with them awhile she angry as she fell down when she stepped on several of them and in the morning she made her daughter take the turtles to the creek and empty them out.

At another time she had a pet coon. He was one of the

most mischievous pets she ever had. He would slip down cellar and skim off the cream off the milk. Then he would take off a layer of jelly cake and sit up with it in his front paws and eat it. He would sneak into the house and get into the cupboard and get at the eatables. He became such a nuisance that he had to be got rid of. Every time that she had to part with her pets there was almost a scene. She had all the dogs and cats in the neighborhood coaxed up and her home was almost a menagerie.



THE GRATEFUL CAT

A number of years ago a little boy, whom we will call Billie, was going down town, his attention was called to an almost heart-rending "me-ow." stopped and listened to see if he could tell from whence the distressful "me-ow" came. He knew that it indicated that somebody's pussy was in distress.

He looked around about him without discovering from whence the sound came, and he was about to pass along when the "me-ow" was uttered with a more piercing sound. He looked closer than formerly and he saw something moving under a big rock that

stood near the road, going up to it, he found a little kitty and she appeared to be fast and could not get away for some unknown reason to him. Upon closer inspection he found that the kitty was caught in a trap.

He commenced to try to loosen her from her prison. He managed to get the kitty and trap out from under the rock. The kitty was in so much pain that she fought Billie, trying to scratch and bite him, not knowing that he was trying to render her a service and to relieve her of her torture.

Billie's troubles had now commenced in earnest. How was he to get the kitty out of the trap without getting bitten or scratched, as the kitty was almost frantic with pain. He finally placed his foot upon the spring of the trap and forced it down, so that the

jaws of the trap stood open, but after doing this her foot would not come out as the jaw of the trap had imbedded itself into the kitty's leg. A happy thought came to him. He procured a stick and as he pried down on the spring and the jaws stood apart he pushed the kitty's leg from off the jaw and she was at last freed.

When this happened she ran a ways and then sat down and commenced to lap her injured foot. Billie kept calling kitty, kitty, and at the same time going nearer to her. She paid no attention to him but kept on lapping her leg until Billie was able to come up to her, all the time calling kitty, kitty. He came so close to her that he could scratch her head. The kitty never stirred but kept on licking her leg and then finally commenced to purr.

She allowed herself to be

picked up and Billie took her home and had his mother bind up her leg and put some liniment on it and then he got her some milk and fed her. She ate as if she had had nothing to eat for an age.

She was so well pleased with her treatment that she decided to stay there and make it her permanent residing place.

Billie and the little kitty were great friends. Whenever he was at home the kitty was sure to find him and to purr and rub around him, as much as to say that he was her best friend.

Billy's father ran a store and as he kept great quantities of grain stored in the warehouse, it made it a temptation for the rats to make a raid on the place, in fact they became so bad, that they destroyed a large amount of the corn and wheat. It became a serious

question with him, how to get rid of the rodents.

Billie told him he would get rid of them for him. His father told him he would get him a new suit of clothes if he got rid of them.

Billie took his kitty down one night and gave her to understand that he wanted her to catch rats.

In the morning when he went down to the store, the kitty met him at the door and rubbed around him and commenced to purr, then she ran ahead as much as to say, "let me show you something." He went along and there on the floor were two large dead rats.

He went and got the kitty some milk and meat, which she ate and then went and laid down.

Billie related what he had done and also what the kitty had done. The next night about closing time, there was

a loud me-ow heard at the outside door of the store. Billie went and opened the door for kitty to come in. Imagine his surprise, little folks when instead of one kitty, there was his kitty and some over a dozen more kitties.

They all ran into the store, and Billie's kitty appeared to be the captain of the brigade. She would say something in cat talk to one of the kitties, and they would go off into one corner of the store room, where she left the other cat, stationed as a guard. She did the same with each of the other cats until she had them all to her liking. Then she took her place at a connecting door, where the rats had their chief run-way.

Billie was greatly amused but he said nothing to anyone about it as he thought he would wait until morning and see what the outcome would

be of this warlike measure.

In the morning when Billy came down to the store, his kitty was the first to greet him. With purring and rubbing and going ahead of him she brought him to a part of the store where there was a great pile of rats. Upon counting them there was found to be over thirty dead rats.

The kitty had found that the job was too strenuous for her and she had gone out and marshalled her friends and stated the case to them and they gladly came to her assistance and helped her to clean up the rats.

This whole outfit of kitties were treated to all the meat and salmon they could eat and plenty of nice milk to wash it down.

Billy always kept his kitty and she had the best things to eat he could get her. He got his new suit of clothes and

the rats never bothered this place any more.

Moral—This little story shows you children that even kitties can be of service to you, if you treat them right.



THE HORSE AND BOY

A number of years ago when there were saloons in every town and little hamlet and when "humane officers" were an unknown quantity, there lived on a plantation on the outskirts of a county seat town, a man by the name of Col. Dowd. He was a "hale fellow well met," when he was not drinking.

About once a month he would come into town early in the morning and make a day of it in the numerous saloons in the town. He always rode his favorite saddle horse.

One morning he made his periodical visit. He tied his horse to a post along in the

business district and then he hied himself to the nearest saloon, where he at once commenced to imbibe the stuff that steals away a man's brains and drains his pockets of his cash. He always commenced on a mint julep and wound up with whisky straight. He never would stop until he was completely knocked out.

Little Jimmie Baxter came tripping along the street with his school books under his arm along about 8 o'clock in the morning on his way to school. As he came by the horse he was attracted to it. He lay down his books and went to the hitching rail and gently stroked the nose of the horse, who seemed to like to be caressed.

After fondling the horse a few minutes, he picked up his books and went on to school.

When he came from school at noon the horse was still

standing at the hitching post and as he saw Jimmie he commenced to 'whinny' as much as to say, "he was glad to see him." Jimmie fondled him again, but the horse seemed to want something. "What can he want?" said Jimmie to himself. "Maybe, he wants some water." So he untied him and took him around to the water trough where the horse took a good long drink. After this he quietly stepped back from the trough as if to say he had had enough. So Jimmie took him back and hitched him to the post, but still the horse appeared to want something. So Jimmie went and pulled an armful of grass and gave it to him. By a slight 'whinny' he told Jimmie, "Thank you."

Jimmie then went home and related at the dinner table all about the horse and what he had done for him. His par-

ents told him he was a nice boy, but he ought to be careful around strange horses.

When he went back to school after dinner, the horse was glad to see him and came up as far as he could, so that Jimmie might rub and fondle him.

At night as Jimmie came home from school the horse told him as plainly as he could that he wanted more water and more grass. Jimmie gave him water and more grass and then went home. He told his father that the horse was still hitched to the post and had had no attention from his owner, so his father went out and took the horse to a livery stable and had him put up, as he knew whose horse he was and also knew that his owner would be in no shape to go home that night.

After stabling the horse he went and hunted up Col.

Dowd. He found him maudlin drunk in a saloon. With the assistance of a couple of other men he was taken to a hotel for the night.

Along in berrying time, one Saturday, Jimmie and some other of his boy chums started out after berries. Jimmie's mother had him put on his red sweater, as she was afraid he might need it. They went only a short way out of town, going out on Col. Dowd's plantation.

By some mischance, Jimmie became separated from his companions and went into another field, where there appeared to be more berries. He was busily engaged in picking berries, when he was suddenly aroused by a loud bellowing. He looked around to see what the disturbance was when he was almost stricken dead with fear as he saw a large, fierce bull making directly for him. What to do he did not know.

He could not get over the fence on account of the berry bushes, seeing a medium sized tree near him, he made for it and barely reached the first branch when the bull was upon him, but fortunately he was out of reach.

The bull shook his head, flirted his tail and pawed up the ground, as he was so mad in not being able to get his prey. He bellowed loudly and kicked up the dirt and made a great dust. His bellowings caused a horse that was in an adjoining field to take notice. In an instant, the horse took in the situation. He took a run and lightly jumped the fence and came up to the tree where the bull had the boy treed.

The horse saw his young friend up the tree and he made up his mind to rescue him. He commenced to talk in animal language to the bull and told him that he ought to be ashamed.

ed of himself and that he should go away and mind his own business. It is none of your affair and what business have you for mixing in said the bull. He was just like some human beings, who being detected in some dark and shady actions are cautioned by their friends to desist and to change their tactics. And they answer them as the bull did the horse, "that it was none of his business and for him to attend to his own affairs and let him alone."

"Well," said the horse, "I will make it my business and at once. If you do not get out of here at once I will show you whose business it is." The bull shook his head as if to hook the horse. The horse immediately whirled around and commenced to kick the bull on the sides and head until the bull roared with pain and gradually moved off down

to the farther side of the lot. He had some broken ribs and a horn that was kicked so hard that it just hung by the skin to his head.

After the bull had made himself scarce, the horse, softly whinnied and looked up the tree as much as to say it is safe for you to come down. The horse sidled up to the tree and the boy climbed down and got astride of the horse and he was carried across the lot to a place of safety. As Jimmie got off the horse he stroked him with his hand and kissed him on the nose. And the horse rubbed his head on Jimmie's shoulder as much as to say, that Jimmie was not the least bit in debt to him.

M o r a l . Never forget a favor done, but repay with interest.

TOMMY'S PIGGIE BUT FATHER'S HOG

A number of years ago there lived down among the long leaf pines among the sands of what is now Candor, a little boy by the name of Tommy.

Tommy was the youngest of a family of thirteen, an unlucky number as it oftentimes proved for him.

Tommy was not favored much although he was the baby. He had to take what the rest of the family did not want. He had to wear what his older brothers cast off, if they ever did not wear out their clothes. He had to wear shoes too large for him if any at all, and his pants he could turn around in them and a hat he never had. In fact he was

very much neglected. But he was a very contented little lad and most anything suited him.

The family cow was the mother of a puny little calf that no one thought would live. Tommy was much interested in it and begged his father to let him have it. The father, thinking it would die soon, told his son he could have it. Tommy at once commenced to try and make it live. His mother, taking pity on him gave him more sweet milk than she ordinarily would and showed him how to fix it so it would be the best for the calf. He nursed the calf tenderly for days and it commenced to show results from the careful nursing.

It was not many weeks before the calf was quite strong and was very frisky. Whenever it saw Tommy it would come to him and would follow him around like a dog.

The days grew into weeks and the weeks into months and still the calf grew until it became a fine yearling. About this time a man came along and wanted to buy it. He offered what was a good price in those days and he bought and drove it off while Tommy was away.

When Tommy came home, he went out to feed his calf some fine grass he had pulled but he could not find it. He hurried into the house and asked his mother about it. "Why, your father sold the calf." "Sold my calf?" "Yes, he sold it." Tommy commenced to cry and would not be consoled.

When his father came home, he asked him, why he had sold his calf.

"I didn't sell your calf. It was yours when a calf, but mine when a yearling."

Tommy could not quite see

the philosophy of this and wanted to know at what period in the calf's life the ownership changed.

Tommy took the matter so much at heart, that his father said that he would give him a pig. There were seven little piggies about a week old out in the pen and one of them was a little runt. His father told him he could have it. "Now, father, don't rob yourself, for you see that is the poorest little pig in the lot." "Now, that is my pig, is it? Will it be mine, when it becomes a hog?"

This was a stunner for the father, he did not know how to answer it. He found that he was dealing with a son who was young in years, but old in experience.

"Well, we will see about it later on," said the father.

"Now, father, I don't want to be disappointed in this pig

business as I was in the calf deal. If it is my pig, it must be my hog, if I take care of it. You would not give it to me, if you thought it ever would amount to anything. Just as in the case of the calf. You thought it would not live and you gave it to me."

"Well, it will be yours, just take care of it and if you can make a hog of it, it will be yours."

Tommy, at once commenced to raisee the pig. He took it away from the rest and took great care of it. Mr. Piggy commenced to show improvement, because he got something to eat. He and Tommy became great friends and whenever the later came around where the pig was, it instantly ran to him. Tommy taught him tricks. He would stand upon his hind feet and squeal, whenever Tommy told him to speak. He always re-

ceived a reward in something to eat, if nothing more than the core of an apple. He would lay down and be a dead pig, when Tommy would say, "be a dead pig."

In fact he was taught a great many tricks. People would come for miles to see Tommy and his trick pig.

So much notoriety did this pig get that a showman came to Tommy's home to buy it. Tommy did not want to sell him but the showman offered such a high price that he finally consented to let him go.

W h a t happened? The father put the money in his pocket. Tommy wanted it, but the father said that it was his hog. "Why, father, you told me that it should be my pig and my hog."

"We will fix that." So the next day the father took Tommy to town and bought him a straw hat. And that was all

Tommy got from the sale of his pig.

Tommy saw the injustice of the whole matter. But what could he do. A few weeks afterward Tommy came up missing and never anything was heard of him for years.

One day, some twenty years afterwards a man drove up to Tommy's old home, with a span of fine dappled gray horses and fine buggy. He tied his horses and knocked at the door. A gray headed old lady appeared. He asked her "if he could get lodging for himself and shelter for his horses."

"Well, stranger, we never turn any one from our door, but our accommodations are not very good. If you can stand our fare, you are welcome."

The stranger accepted the proffered offer and drove his team to the barn and unhitch-

ed them and placed them in an old tumbled down shed. Then he repaired to the house.

It was not long until the man of the house came in. Matters were explained to him. They fed and watered the horses and then sat down to a very frugal meal.

After supper, the stranger asked the host if he had any yearlings or hogs for sale. Finding he had not, he asked him about his place, and whether it was for sale. The host told him he would sell it, but he would probably ask more for it than he was willing to pay. He named his price and the stranger said he would take it and that they would all go to the county seat the next day and make out the deed.

Which was done. "Now, how soon can you vacate?" asked the man. This was a hard one for the old couple. This had been their home for

almost a half century and they were to leave it.

Just here, the stranger said, "Father and mother don't you know me?" "I am your Tommy."

The old couple were completely broken up with surprise and joy. And there never was a more pleasant evening spent by any father, mother and son than this one.

He told them how he had gone away and worked and got an education and by good luck had accumulated quite a little property and that it had always been his desire to make their last days happy. He had been informed monthly about them by a mutual friend, who kept him posted for the last five years.

He built them a cozy home and fixed up the farm and left a fund in the bank for them to live on.

Every few months he would

make them a visit and saw to it that nothing was omitted that would prevent them from enjoying life.

Children, do you think that the calf deal and the hog sale ever came to the mind of the old father? You bet it did, and how badly he must have felt when he considered what a noble son he had.

This old couple lived for many years but finally passed away with nothing but thankfulness for their little Tommy.

Moral — Farmers if you want to keep your sons on the farm, give them an interest in things in fee simple and then they will stay with you. Don't give them the pig and you take the hog.

THE CAT AND THE FISH

Some years ago, there lived a family near the banks of the Pee Dee River near Mangum, N. C. They sold their place and moved away, but they left their old cat as an inheritance for the coming tenants.

It was several weeks ere another family moved into the empty house, and in the meantime, Old Thomas had to look out for himself and forage for his living.

He would meander down to the banks of the river and catch fish and make a meal upon them. He would pull them out of the water with his lightning quick claws.

He was observed one day sitting on the bank looking

right into the dreamy eyes of a big catfish, the head of which was protruded several inches out of the water, without trying to harm it.

They appeared to be exchanging "goo goo" eyes with each other, and apparently were enjoying each other's company.

Old Tom would bring down pieces of food and claw them into the water and Mrs. Catfish would swim around and gobble up the food and in return she would swim around to the edge of the bank and leave some small fish she had caught. This occurrence was a daily one and was kept up all summer. And was purely a love affair and possibly would have culminated into something permanent had not several unfortunate circumstances occurred to mar the serenity of it.

The housekeeper in the new

family did not take kindly to Old Tom and she was determined to get rid of him. So she hired a boy to put him into a box with a stone in it and then had the box nailed down and had him to throw the whole outfit into the river.

The boy took the box, cat and stone to the river bank and threw it in and it instantly sank to the bottom of the river. Poor Old Tom. His chances for life were very slim if it had not been for the watchfulness of Mrs. Catfish. She was doing duty and was swimming around at the place the box and cat were dumped and she immediately dove to the bottom of the river and brought up the box with Old Tom in it to the surface of the water in her mouth. She swam rapidly and ran against a large rock that was protruding from the water. She did it purposely, in order to loosen the

slats on the box. She was going with so much speed that the box hit the rock a crashing blow and it flew open and Old Tom landed high and dry on the rock.

After Old Tom was freed from his perilous position, it then became a question, how he was to get to the shore as he could not swim. Mrs. Catfish was fertile in schemes and she told him to jump into the water. He had the most implicit faith in her and he jumped. Mrs. Catfish swam around and caught him by the neck with her mouth and towed him to the shore, where he at once commenced to lick himself dry. He very profusely thanked her for saving his life and told her that he would try and do her a friendly service if occasion ever happened for him to do so.

Old Tom did not go back to his old home. He began to

think that his company was not wanted, but he went to a neighbor's. Here he was fed on milk and bread. He would lap the milk but the bread he would save and take to his sweetheart—the catfish. This procedure was kept up for several weeks, until one day as Tom was going down to the trysting place, he saw a fisherman land a large fish. After he took the fish off the hook he threw it down on the bank. Old Tom recognized the fish as being his affinity, and while the fisherman was baiting his hook, Old Tom rushed up and grabbing Mrs. Catfish by the fins, with his mouth, he scampered off with her and dropped her over the bank into the river. The fisherman saw the whole performance, but he was not quick enough to intercept the cat and he was out a nice fish.

After this episode they con-

tinued their courtship until cold weather came and the river froze over. Old Tom did not seem himself. He moped about with a dejected air and would hardly eat. Finally the two strange lovers found a way to keep their tryst by meeting at an air hole in the ice.

However, the tragic end came ere the ice thawed out. A hunter passing along the bank saw the cat out on the ice at the air hole and he thought it was a mink, watching to catch any fish that might be so foolish as to come up to get air, shot him. The hunter went out on the ice to get his mink, as he supposed, but lo, and behold, Mrs. Catfish forestalled him as she drew the dead cat through the air hole and probably gave him a swell burial in the bed of the river.

THE BLIND HORSE

Years ago, when oak trees were large and plentiful in the Northern states, they were cut for ship timbers. The bark was all peeled off the logs and it was corded up like wood and left in the woods to dry. After it was thoroughly dried it was hauled to the tanneries, where it was corded up in great piles for future use.

At the tanneries great pits were dug and filled with water and the hides of horses, cattle and sheep were thrown into these pits after lime and ground tan-bark had been mixed with the water. The hides were left in these vats for several weeks, but they had to be turned daily. This process

took all the hair off the hides and thoroughly tanned them.

After the hides had been in the vats several weeks, they were hung out on the fence to dry, and when dried, they were scraped and then they were ready to be made up into shoes for the little children and harnesses for the horses.

This tan-bark was ground in a mill. The building where this particular mill was located was down by the river and a bridge connected it with the hill-side.

The mill was something like a coffee mill or grinder only it was much larger.

The mill was located in the middle of a large circular platform, upon which a horse traveled. The horse went round and round from day to day. The bark was fed into the mill in big slabs by a boy and it came out of the mill almost as fine as saw dust. The

horse was started and he would keep going without a driver after he became accustomed to his duties.

At the place we have in mind, a horse was placed in here when quite young and he kept at it for years and did nothing else. When it was time to feed and water him, he was taken out across the bridge and down a lane to the main road and then down to the river to get some water. This became a habit with him and he would be loosened at the mill and he would go and get a drink of water and then come back to the stable, where he got his dinner or supper as the case might be.

However, the horse commenced to go blind, but he kept on going after water as usual, alone. In fact, when he became totally blind, he kept up the habit and never made a misstep. He appear-

ed to know where to go as he had been doing the same things for years.

To people, who did not know the history of this poor old blind horse, it was a great curiosity to see him do his daily stunt.

Moral—The lesson to be drawn from this little story, children, is, that habits become so fixed with us, that they almost become second nature to us, and therefore, it shows that we should see to it that all our habits are good habits.



THE DOG AND THE LOST CHILD

The dog is man's best friend. He may lick and pound him and he will turn and lick the hand that gave him the punishment.

This story is located in the New England states, down in the Green Mountain State—Vermont—where they have a great amount of snow in the winter time. Ofttimes the snow is so deep that people pay no attention to the roads but go right over the fences across the fields with their sleds and sleighs.

Fifty-nine years ago the following events occurred. Perhaps, it would be best to explain the surroundings. The

house that we are about to speak of, was built on a hill and there was a basement that fronted on the road. There was a door in the basement and there was a bell upon a stand near the building. This was used to call the people of the house to their meals.

Well this year at Epiphany, it had been snowing for a week. One might have thought that the world was coming to an end. When we would go to the windows to look over the fields, this immense white, frozen country, which shone like varnish, would chill our very souls. One might have thought that the Lord had packed the world in cotton to put it in the storeroom for the old worlds. Indeed it was dreary.

Everything was ready for the celebration of Epiphany, and the whole household were happy, very happy. Every-

body was in the parlor, awaiting dinner, when one of the family remarked that there had been a dog howling out in the fields for about ten minutes; he said, "he must be lost."

He had hardly stopped talking when the bell on the outside commenced to ring. It had the sound of a deep church bell, which made one think of death. A shiver ran through everybody. The father called to one of the boys and told him to go outside and look.

The whole company waited in complete silence; they were thinking of the snow which covered the ground. When the young man returned he claimed that he had seen nothing. However, the dog kept up its ceaseless howling, and the place whence the voice came did not change.

They all sat down to dinner,

but were all moved, especially the young people. Everything went well up to the roast, then the bell began to ring again, three times in succession, three heavy, long strokes which vibrated to the tips of their fingers and which stopped their conversation short. They all sat there looking at each other fork in air, still listening, and shaken by a kind of supernatural fear.

Some of the men folks went out to investigate but after an hour's absence they came back and said it was nothing only a blasted dog baying at the moon.

Again they sat down to dinner but every one was excited; they felt that all was not over, that something was going to happen, that the bell would soon ring again.

It rang just as the Twelfth Night cake was being cut. All the men jumped up together.

They all started out with guns and clubs, ready for any emergency.

It had been snowing again for the last hour, and the trees were weighted down. The pines were bending down under this heavy, livid garment and looked like enormous white pyramids of sugar cones, and through the gray curtains of small hurrying flakes could be seen the lighter bushes which stood out pale in the shadow. The snow was falling so thick that they could hardly see ten feet ahead of them. But the lantern threw a bright light around them.

It was discouraging to the party as they wended their way over the large expanse of the fields. All they could see was the blinding snow. But still the howls of the dog were very plain. Some of the party wanted to shoot but were restrained from doing so by the

wiser counsels of the others.

It will be much better to go to him and see what the matter is. He may be barking for help. He is calling like a man in distress. So they all decided to go to him.

So they again started out through the mist, through the thick, continuous fall of snow, which filled the air, which moved, floated, fell and chilled the skin with a burning sensation like a sharp pain as each flake melted. Up to their knees they waded in this soft, cold mass, and they had to pick their legs up very high in order to walk. As they walked on the dog's voice became plainer and plainer, until they suddenly came on him. He was frightful and fantastic to see; he was a big black shepherd's dog with long hair and a wolf's head, standing just within reach of our light, shining on the snow. He did not

move; he was silently watching them. He neither advanced or retreated. This was thought to be strange. There was something behind him, something gray, impossible to distinguish. When the dog saw them approaching, he sat down and observed them. He, in fact seemed pleased to think that he had been able to attract attention.

One of the party went up to him and rubbed him on his head and petted him. The dog licked his hand. He was found to be hitched to the wheel of a little carriage, a sort of a toy buggy entirely wrapped up in three or four woolen blankets. They carefully took off these blankets and the light of the lantern revealed a little baby sleeping peacefully.

The baby and dog were taken to the house and they were both given a home there.

The dog nor the baby were recognized by no one, but the baby must have been left there by people who knew the family, and was the offspring of well to do people, judging from the fine quality of its clothing. The baby was a little girl and was brought up as a daughter of the family.

The dog lived to a good old age and had the best of care.

Moral—Investigation is better than to rush into matters in a haphazard way.



THE LITTLE GIRL AND THE TOAD

Every child has seen a toad? It is not a pretty thing. It is ugly and repulsive, but for all that it is of great service to the gardener and the farmer. The toad does no harm but on the contrary does good.

The idea that a toad, if handled will cause warts to come on a person is untrue. An old superstition that does not have a semblance of truth.

At night, is the time that he comes out from his resting place and goes to work. It is seldom that he ventures out much in the day time, but when the evening shades commence to fall, he may be seen, coming out from under the

porch or steps or from some other concealed place. He hops about and if closely watched he will be discovered busy in catching bugs and flies and other insects. By doing this he helps the housewife, the gardener and the farmer by ridding them of a lot of harmful insects and helps the plants and flowers to grow. Which, if he did not do this, the life of the plants would be injured by the insects.

Toads lay their eggs in long strings, forming double files in straight, jelly-like tubes.

Last summer as a little Troy girl was going down the street one evening she saw some boys punching and prodding something alive under the electric light. Coming closer, she found that they were torturing a little toad, which was under the electric light, catching bugs.

She stepped up and made

them desist from their cruelties upon his toadship, and told them they ought to be ashamed of themselves for trying to injure the little toad as he was perfectly harmless and was doing everybody a favor by catching the bugs.

"He is no good and will make a person have warts, if he handles him," said the boys. "O, no," said the little girl, and suiting her words to her actions, she picked up the toad with her hands and carried it home, where she put it under a bush and left it.

Every night the toad would come out from under the bush and hop around on the walk and gather up the dead flies as well as to catch the crawling and flying insects. The dead flies were put out there by the little girl so the toad would be sure to have a good meal.

A sort of friendship grew

between the little girl and the toad, and the latter would not go far away as long as she was around.

This little girl was a great lover of flowers and had a number of choice roses and other plants and the grub worms and angle worms were eating their roots more or less which was hindering their growth. She dug around their roots and caught as many of these worms as she could but still they bothered. A happy thought occurred to her. Perhaps, Mr. Toad might help her out, so she took him over to one of the shrubs and after stirring the ground, she put him down near the shrub. He appeared to know what was wanted of him and he commenced operations. All of a sudden her shrubs commenced to take on new life, the withered stems started out afresh and there was an air of fresh-

ness about them that was surprising. She did not know what to make of it, so she began to take more notice of them.

She not only found her old friend, the toad, there, but she also found that there were toads all about her rose bushes and shrubs.

Undoubtedly, Mr. Toad had gone out and called on his brother toads and asked them to help him in doing a favor to the little girl, who had saved his life.

The toads were so well pleased with their pleasant surroundings that they made their home around this little girl's home for months. At a given time each night a toad could be seen coming out from under the back steps, one from the side steps and others from the front porch and others around the flower pit. They all knew that they had nothing

to fear from anyone in this home. And they showed their appreciation by keeping the worms, ants and other insects from injuring the flowers.

Moral—This story teaches the children that they should not harm the homely toad as he does us a great service, although he is ugly looking. The homely are often more pleasant than the good-lookers.



THE HEN FINDS A GOLD MINE

Away back in the nineteenth century there lived down among the sand dunes near the Little River in Montgomery County a very poor family. It consisted of a father and mother and seven small children. Their home was a poor old shack that barely served them a shelter. The roof was so poor that the rain would leak through in the time of a storm and the weather boarding had shrunk so badly that daylight could be seen through the cracks. It had been made of green lumber.

The question of keeping the wolf from the door was a serious question with the father and the mother. Their home

was among the long leaf pines and just barely enough land had been cleared to admit of the little hut, they called their home. Their pigs ran almost wild in the forest and at nights they would come up to the house to get what scraps they might find. They had a poor old cow that furnished them some milk and a lot of chickens that roosted in the pine trees about the house.

With the milk they got from the cow, with a little meal that they were able to get by exchanging work with some distant neighbors, and the eggs their hens furnished them, and the wild berries that grew profusely, and the meat their hogs made for them, they were able to eke out a mere existence. Clothing was their most serious trouble to procure. They barely had enough to hide their nakedness.

Such was their condition at

the beginning of this little story. But Dame Fortune had something better in store for them, but they were not aware of the fact at that time.

It was very difficult for the little boys and girls of this family to keep track of the hens and to find their nests. The hens would steal their nests away and they were hard to discover. But the little fellows kept a close watch upon them and were able to get most of the eggs.

The family had been out of meat for some time and they were almost famished for it. The mother finally solved the question. There were several hens that ran away and laid their eggs and the children were unable to find their nests. So the mother decided to kill off these hens and cook them and furnish her meat famished family.

Acting upon this idea, she

killed one of the plumpest of the run-away hens. While picking and dressing it she discovered something shiny in its craw. She saved it and showed it to her husband. He at once knew it was gold. A small nugget. He told her what it was and cautioned her about telling any one. He also told her that she and the children should watch those run-away hens and see where they went, if possible.

A careful watch was kept upon the hens and at last they were found along the small stream that flowed near their home. They were seen to pick up the sand along the brook. Another of these hens was killed and another small piece of gold was found in her craw. The husband then was satisfied the hens got their gold along the creek. That set him to thinking. He took an old skillet and went down to the

creek and filled it with sand and washed it out. To his surprise he found quite a quantity of gold specks in his pan. He kept at it all day and by night time he had several penny-weights of the precious stuff.

Secrecy was enjoined upon the whole family and they all worked there for weeks until they had quite a quantity of gold.

After accumulating quite an amount, he went to Salisbury, where he sold his gold to good advantage, having about \$500 worth.

With part of it he bought clothing and supplies for his family. He also went to an attorney and found out what he must do to secure his rights. The lawyer tried to find out where he got his gold but our Rube was too sharp for him, and slipped away in the night so that he would not trail him down.

He arrived home safely in due time and his little family was made happy with the much needed clothing, shoes and eatables.

He immediately established his claims upon the find and made it legal proof.

It was not long until this gold find was heralded all over the country. People flocked here in great numbers and offered him great sums for his claim, but he would not sell it all. But he sold enough of it to make him comfortable all the rest of his life.

He moved to town, built him a good house and sent his children to school. They and their descendants are now some of the best people of the Old North State.

Moral—Always do your best no matter what your lot.





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